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STAFF NOTES:

Latin American Trends

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LATIN AMERICAN TRENDS

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Western Hemisphere Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Colombia: Perceiving The United States25X1A


A significant change is occurring in the Colombian Government's perception of and attitude toward the US. Even more significant is the apparent readiness of President Lopez to act on that changed perception. In its half-year tenure, the Lopez administration has gradually developed strong and stubborn convictions about the US, and these, while not hostile, have turned Colombia away from its traditionally close relationship with this country.

Lopez sees the US as largely indifferent to Colombia and the rest of Latin America. Moreover, he sees contradictions in our maintaining supposedly co-equal relationships with Latin countries while single-mindedly pursuing our own national interest--particularly when that interest compels us to impose sanctions on or even, in Colombian eyes, to intervene outright in the affairs of another country. Furthermore, Lopez sees the US as an exporter of its domestic problems in the sense that US internal politics affects US foreign policy, which in turn affects Colombian development through assistance programs and other channels of influence. This view forces the Lopez government into a mind-set such that the value of bilateral relations is judged largely in terms of how the US responds to Colombian problems, interests, and needs.

A thorough investigation of this change in the Colombian attitude toward the US would involve many complex, long-range factors. Three more immediate reasons can be isolated, however. One is the meeting of the Organization of American States that was held last November. Lopez believes that the organization

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would have lifted its long-standing economic sanctions against Cuba if the US delegation had played more than a neutral role. Another reason is the new Trade Reform Act. Although this legislation has no direct impact on US-Colombian trade, the Lopez administration interprets the restrictive language of the act as evidence that the US continues to impose conditions on the terms of international agreements, including those broadly affecting US assistance to other countries.

The third immediate reason for the changed Colombian perception of the US is a collection of unresolved bilateral issues. The most important of these is US protectionist legislation affecting Colombian textiles. Another is the apparent lack of US interest in drawing up a new international coffee agreement. Yet another is the US delay in ratifying the treaty on Quita Sueno and two other tiny Caribbean islands, the disposition of which last year was supposed to end a minor but long-standing irritation in bilateral relations. Still another is the issue of whether Colombia's right of free passage through the Panama Canal will be preserved in the treaty now being negotiated by the US and Panama.

There is a characteristically Latin thread of personalism and concern for "dignity" running through all this--a point easily overlooked from the geographic and cultural distance of Washington. Colombians are intensely protective of personal honor, which affects their country's foreign relations in ways that are often surprising to North Americans. The defeat of the resolution to end the Cuba sanctions at the November OAS meeting, for example, was personally embarrassing to the President and the foreign minister, as they had proposed and strongly supported the resolution. In this unfamiliar--even alien--atmosphere, logical arguments carry little weight. Colombian resentment of the US is profound and is clearly eroding our countries' tradition of excellent bilateral relations. (CONFIDENTIAL/NO FOREIGN DISSEM/BACKGROUND USE ONLY/CONTROLLED DISSEM)

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Argentina: Catholic Church Raps Lopez Rega

As if he did not have enough enemies already, presidential adviser and confidant Lopez Rega has now incurred the wrath of the Roman Catholic Church in Argentina. According to the papal nuncio, the church hierarchy was highly offended by Lopez Rega's recent invitation to an off-beat religious sect to officiate at a mass dedicating the new "Altar of the Fatherland"--a monument where Juan and Evita Peron are to be laid to rest.

Lopez Rega, who is believed to be a practicing spiritualist, arranged the ceremony presided over by the American Orthodox Apostolic Catholic Church, a small group founded by defrocked Catholic priests who purportedly practice a mixture of spiritualism and voodoo. This bizarre religious order is headquartered in Brazil where Lopez Rega frequently travels--apparently for pseudo-religious purposes. Lopez Rega's mysticism is a topic of considerable public speculation and indignation has been expressed in military, labor, business, and opposition party circles.

Lopez Rega's troubles with the church have been compounded by a quarrel between the federal administrator of Cordoba Province, Raul Lacabanne, and the Roman Catholic leadership. Lacabanne, who is under fire for his high-handed actions and abuse of civil rights in Cordoba, is a political ally of Lopez Rega.

In a second display of poor judgment last week, Lopez Rega opened himself to attack from critics on yet another front. Accompanied by an entourage of social welfare ministry minions and the presidential press secretary, he made a brief trip to Misiones Province, where he turned over seventeen ambulances to a local hospital and gave several hundred thousand dollars worth of subsidies and equipment to local

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organizations. Provincial elections are scheduled early next month, and his trip has been widely interpreted as government interference to ensure a good showing for the Peronists. Lopez Rega's blatant partisan gesture has already brought private mutterings of disgust from some Peronist politicians, and it is sure to elicit condemnation from all opposition parties.

The social welfare minister's inveterate dabbling in spiritualist hokum and his unabashed efforts to ingratiate himself with the voting public will have a detrimental impact on Mrs. Peron's political position and further weaken support from key social and political sectors. In short, he continues to be a major liability to the President.
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Argentina: New Movement On The Left

The split in Peronist ranks was boldly underscored last week when an assemblage of dissident left-wing Peronists, including some prominent former government officials, met in Buenos Aires to launch the Authentic Peronist Party. To the surprise of almost no one, the government responded by sending police to disband the meeting, claiming that its sponsors had not obtained the proper permit and that it violated the state of siege.

Organizational efforts have been under way for some time now to put together a coalition of leftist opponents to President Isabel Peron's rightist-oriented Peronist government. Last week's abortive rally was timed to coincide with the second anniversary of the victory of Peron's Justicialist Liberation Front (FREJULI) in the elections on March 11, 1973. By holding the affair at the Nino Restaurant, where Peron conducted negotiations with other political parties to form FREJULI, the left-wing organizers clearly hoped to make the point that they are the legitimate heirs of Peronist doctrine.

Among the key backers the press cited former president Hector Campora, who is said to be maintaining permanent contact with the new party's supporters. Campora has been living in self-imposed exile in Mexico because of his fear of assassination at the hands of right-wing death squads. His recently published book entitled Peron's Mandate is a clear-cut bid to establish himself as the true disciple of Peron. Actually, Campora was held in contempt by Peron and was forced to step down as ambassador to Mexico while Peron was on his deathbed.

In addition to leftist Peronist luminaries such as the deposed governors of several provinces, the Authentic party evidently commands strong allegiance

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from radical Peronist youth and the Montonero guerilla movement. In its declaration of principles, the party pledged itself to a "revolutionary definition of Peronism" and denounced the "commitments contracted with imperialism behind the people's back." Strong criticism was hurled at Mrs. Peron's administration for violating Peronist ideals and adopting the same principles as the military dictatorships that the Peronists fought to unseat.

The gathering at the Nino Restaurant marks the first endeavor by the fragmented left to unite against the ruling orthodox Justicialist Party on the national level. The left embarked on this path several months ago in Misiones Province, where it hopes to run candidates in the first electoral contest to be held since the Peronists returned to power. With the elections less than a month away, the government is stalling in granting legal recognition. At first the left tried to gain entry on the ballot as the Descamisado Party (named after Peron's "shirtless ones"), but an electoral court prohibited the party from using Peronist slogans or labels.

The government is apt to continue using all the power at its discretion to prevent the inscription of a rival Peronist party that might challenge it at the polls. While the military will back the government's measures to exclude a leftist political movement from political participation, the potential threat raised by the left will not be lost on officers who already believe that Mrs. Peron's constituency has eroded considerably. (SECRET)

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Surinam: Independence Talks

This week in The Hague, the Netherlands and its internally self-governing colony of Surinam open a new round of negotiations to determine the terms under which the latter will achieve independence later this year. The current Realm Conference of Prime Ministers was preceded by a lower level meeting in Surinam during late January. At this preliminary meeting, the Dutch agreed to sponsor Surinam's membership in the United Nations and other international organizations and to support Surinam's continued associate membership in the European Community.

The agenda of the Prime Ministers' Conference includes a number of thorny issues which the earlier meeting purposely ignored or left unresolved. Wide differences on the amount and duration of Dutch monetary assistance after independence precipitated a brief breakdown in the January talks and could lead to a similar impasse at the current meeting. Civil rights guarantees for Surinam's minority groups and questions of emigration, repatriation and nationality also will be difficult to resolve. Future civil aviation relations and border questions with French Guiana also are on the agenda.

The Surinamese delegation under the direction of Minister President Henck Arron can be expected to indulge in some theatrics, primarily for its domestic audience, but it will also engage in some very skilled, hard bargaining. Those issues that elude settlement will form the agenda for an "odds and ends" meeting with the Dutch scheduled for May in Surinam. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Chile: Changes in the Army Hierarchy

The death of General Oscar Bonilla, Minister of Defense and Chile's second-ranking army general after President Pinochet, in a helicopter crash on March 3 has resulted in a key retirement and some shuffling of jobs among the army's top generals. The old and new seniority line-ups are compared in the accompanying chart.

The third-ranking general, Hector Bravo, was retired from active service. He probably will accept appointment as ambassador to Thailand and South Vietnam. Bravo was senior to the new minister of defense, Herman Brady, by one day, but reportedly was considered incapable of handling that job. He was not particularly popular in the army and was not highly regarded by Pinochet. In contrast, Brady's abilities apparently have enabled him to dispel doubts about his commitment to the military government lingering from former president Allende's push of his promotion to general and his reluctance to help plot Allende's downfall. With Bonilla and Bravo gone, Brady moves from fourth- to second-ranking general.

The next six ranking generals also have moved up, and generals Carrasco and Toro have made the top ten. The "comer" on the list clearly is General Sergio Arellano, who received a promotion to Major General along with his new post. Arellano is capable, respected by his fellow officers, and close to Pinochet.

The manner in which the changes necessitated by Bonilla's death were handled indicates that seniority, while an important factor, will not be the sole determinant of future changes in the army hierarchy.
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THE CHILEAN ARMY'S TOP TEN
BEFORE AND AFTER BONILLA'S DEATH

<u>BEFORE</u>		<u>NOW</u>	
1. Pinochet	- President Army CINC	Pinochet	- President Army CINC
2. Bonilla	- Minister of Defense	Brady	- Minister of Defense
3. Bravo	- Army Chief of Staff	Benavides	- Minister of Interior
4. Brady	- Chief of the National Defense Staff	Alvarez	- Army Chief of Staff
5. Benavides	- Minister of Interior	Forestier	- Army Inspector General, Deputy Army Chief of Staff
6. Alvarez	- Deputy Army Chief of Staff	Arellano	- Chief of the Na- tional Defense Staff
7. Forestier	- Army Inspector General	Lutz	- CO, V Army Divi- sion, Punta Arenas
8. Arellano	- CO, Santiago Army Garrison*	Palacios	- Vice President, CORFO
9. Lutz	- CO, V Army Division, Punta Arenas	Carrasco	- Director of Army Logistics
10. Palacios	- Vice President CORFO	Toro	- Minister of Mines

*Brig. General Rolando Garay, now number 12 in the hierarchy,
replaces Arellano in this key command.

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Trinidad-Tobago: Labor Strike

A contract dispute between the oilworkers union and Texaco has grown into a confrontation between three militant labor groups and the administration of Prime Minister Eric Williams. The outcome could have long-range economic and political consequences.

Even before the contract between the Oilfield Workers Trade Union and Texaco expired in February, union leader George Weekes made it clear that he would hold out for a major increase in the next three-year pact. He claimed that the workers deserved a bigger share of the income from the booming industry, and that wage increases were also needed to cover the erosion from the workers' income caused by the 20-percent annual inflation. To make this point, he ordered a slowdown that has effectively paralyzed the industry.

Weekes has also convinced two key unions to make common cause with him. Both unions were involved in contract negotiations with the government-controlled sugar companies, and felt they could gain an advantage by linking their efforts with the oilworkers'. They have now brought the sugar industry to a standstill.

In addition to costing the country several million dollars in lost revenue from sugar and oil exports, the united front could also eventually represent an important political challenge to Williams. The front at least temporarily represents an unprecedented alliance between black industrial workers and East Indian agricultural workers.

On March 18, the three unions tried to carry out a protest march to gain publicity for their cause. Police used tear gas to break it up, arrested Weekes,

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and are trying to apprehend the leaders of the two other unions involved.

Williams still is faced with a knotty problem. If he gives in to labor's demands in this case, it will convince the unions that the government can be made to back down. If he stands firm, two key sectors of the economy may remain paralyzed, and he may have to use additional force to get the workers to return to their jobs. This action would stimulate labor opposition against the government. (SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

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Dominica Goes to the Polls

Voters in Dominica, a British dependency in the Lesser Antilles between Martinique and Guadeloupe, go to the polls on March 24 in their first general parliamentary election since October 1970. There is little ideological difference between the major political parties--they are all mildly socialistic, modeled after the British Labor Party. The United Kingdom still controls Dominica's defense and foreign affairs, but there is little pressure for speeding up progress toward independence.

The Dominica Labor Party has been in power for 13 years and is often faulted for its handling of economic and internal security affairs, as well as a tendency toward authoritarianism. Since assuming the office of Premier and the leadership of the party last summer, Patrick John has launched some economic initiatives, but unemployment still hovers at an estimated 50 percent. John's government has had more success in suppressing a cult called "The Dreads," which has been blamed for a variety of criminal offenses ranging from murder to burglary.

The Dominica Freedom Party, the major opposition in the 1970 general election, has entered candidates in only 15 of the 21 constituencies but has ties to independents in the six other races. It promises a new economic development program and a number of new or expanded social welfare programs.

The Progressive Labor Party, a dissident offshoot of the ruling party, has candidates in 8 constituencies and will probably drain votes from its parent organization. The newly formed Caribbean Federal Party claims support from all political shades but is not expected to make much of a showing.

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Late last year Premier John's party was a strong favorite to capture a majority in the new parliament. Now, with the proliferation of independent candidates --some with strong labor union backing--and with the two small parties competing, the outcome is far less certain. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Cuba: Book Review

Unfortunately, David Caute's CUBA, YES? is a sample of the type of literature that will probably be appearing more frequently as Cuban tourism increases. It could best be described as a pseudo-intellectual's snobbish account of a brief sojourn in Cuba. The reader hoping for a relatively unbiased view of the island by a European author (Caute is British) will be disappointed. Studded with considerable misinformation, the book is a sorry addition to a body of literature sorely in need of contributions from authors free of the subjectivity frequently found in the works of Cuban (either pro- or anti-Castro) and US writers.

Except for a few minor sidelights (Caute's Cuban tour guide warned the men in the group not to wear shorts or sandals if they didn't want to be taken for homosexuals), he does little to relay to the reader what he learned of the Cuban revolutionary experience as a result of the trip. Much of his information clearly comes from a newspaper morgue, rather than from personal experience, and suggests that the author has only a thin surface knowledge of the Cuban Revolution. He claims, for example, that "a partial economic blockade (of Cuba) is still enforced by the US Navy" (confusing the naval quarantine during the 1962 missile crisis with the economic denial program); that "the credentials of the young volunteers of the American Venceremos Brigade" are considered by the Cubans to be "impeccable" (the Cubans are well aware that, despite careful recruitment, brigade units frequently contain a high percentage of homosexuals, pot smokers, and other "undesirables" and every effort is made to isolate the brigade from the Cuban population for fear of contamination); that political prisoners are consigned to the Isle of Pines (the infamous Modelo Prison there was converted into a museum/school

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dormitory in the mid-1960s); and that the city of Cienfuegos was named after one of Fidel's guerrilla chieftains, "Camillo" (sic) Cienfuegos (the city bore the name long before Camilo--not Camillo--was a twinkle in someone's eye).

Caute's antipathy toward the US sometimes borders on the childish. "Hatred and hysteria sizzled off the burning sidewalk" is the way he describes "the virulence, the emotional intensity, of American anti-Communism" at the time of Castro's UN visit in September 1960. He portrays Americans as an "affluent people who eat oranges and bananas without a second thought" of the injustices that may be involved in producing these products. On flying to Havana from Gander, "our Czech pilot maintains a respectful distance from Uncle Sam's fiercely patrolled shore."

Even ignoring Caute's anti-US bias, he could at least have gotten Fidel's birthdate correct (1926 instead of 1927); the Bay of Pigs invasion date right (April 17, not April 15); Abel Santamaria's name spelled properly (not Santa Maria), and the membership of the Political Bureau right (eight members, not eleven). He seems more interested in relating how, after ten days, his wife got a fellow tourist to change his odoriferous shirt, than in explaining in depth the attitudes and opinions of the people he met. He has written eleven other books and traveled extensively in the USSR and should therefore be in a position to make some valuable comparisons in an eloquent fashion. This book, however, falls far short of the mark. (UNCLASSIFIED)

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